FIFTEENTH CONFERENCE OF PROJECT SUPERINTENDENTS AND MANAGERS

OUR JOB

Monday, February 10, 1941 Harry Slattery, Administrator 9:15 - 10:00 a.m.

I. WELCOME TO WASHINGTON

II. OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE

III. REA ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND YOUR AREA

IV. SEEING THAT EVERY LOAN IS REPAID

V. REA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

VI. WHAT WE HAVE TO DO

VII. RELATIONSHIP WITH AGRICULTURE

VIII. PROMOTING SOUND NATIONAL DEFENSE

IX. SABOTAGE

X. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION FOR THE MILLIONS

XI. A NOBLE KIND OF PUBLIC SERVICE

XII. HOW YOU CAN HELP US

FIFTEENTH CONFERENCE OF PROJECT SUPERINTENDENTS AND MANAGERS

OTC 305

Monday, February 10, 1941 Henry Slaughter, Administrator 9:45 - 10:00 a.m.

I. WELCOME TO WASHINGTON

II. OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE

III. RCA ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND YOUR AREA

IV. SEEING THAT EVERY LOAN IS REPAID

V. RCA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

VI. WHAT WE HAVE TO DO

VII. RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS

VIII. PROMOTING SOUND NATIONAL DEFENSE

IX. BANQUET

X. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION FOR THE MILLIONS

XI. A NEW KIND OF PUBLIC SERVICE

XII. HOW YOU CAN HELP US

FIFTEENTH CONFERENCE OF PROJECT SUPERINTENDENTS AND MANAGERS

OUR JOB

Monday, February 10, 1941 Harry Slattery, Administrator 9:15 -10:00 a.m.

I. WELCOME TO WASHINGTON

This is our first conference in our new Headquarters. I am as happy to welcome you as you are to be here. During the week that lies ahead, we will do all in our power to make this conference profitable and successful to you, your projects, and all your members involved. We want all of you to feel perfectly at ease in your new home.

II. OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE

These conferences are valuable in proportion as we make them democratic. If there is one thing upon which all the superintendents are agreed who have attended previous conferences, it is that these gatherings should be open forums, and give-and-take affairs. I want to assure everyone present today that this conference is your conference, and I hope that you will participate freely and continuously with your discussions and suggestions in all the sessions that lie ahead.

III. REA ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND YOUR AREA

INFORMATION BLACKBOARD - COLUMN "A"

At each one of these conferences, the superintendents always like to know how their area stacks up in the entire REA program. A brief glance at the blackboard will make this abundantly clear. Under present plans, your area calls for over 53 thousand miles of lines, to serve nearly 180 thousand members, and nearly 55 million dollars. With an average of 5 to the family, this means that 900 thousand persons are represented by you in this conference.

INFORMATION ON BLACKBOARD - COLUMN "B"

The states represented in this conference are a vital part of a great national program. Approximately 350 million dollars are invested in REA systems with nearly 330 thousand miles of line to serve over one million members. With an average farm family of 5, this means we will provide service to some 5 million residents of rural America.

At our present rate of growth, we will have nearly one thousand systems by the end of this year. Consequently, the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri are vital links in this great national rural electrification chain.

III. RTA AUTOMATION AND TOUR AREA

INTERMODAL MARKETS - CHICAGO "A"

As with one of these conferences, the superintendents always like to know how their area stacks up in the entire RTA program. A brief glance at the blackboard will make this abundantly clear. Their present plans, your area rails for over 32 thousand miles of line, to serve nearly 100 stations, and nearly 30 million dollars. With an average of 3 to the family, this means that 300 thousand persons are represented by you in this conference.

INTERMODAL MARKETS - CHICAGO "B"

The rails represented in this conference are a vital part of a great national program. Approximately 350 million dollars are invested in RTA systems with nearly 350 thousand miles of line to serve over one million members. With an average farm family of 5, this means we will provide service to some 5 million Americans of rural America.

At our present rate of growth, we will have nearly one thousand stations by the end of this year. Consequently, the states of Illinois, Indiana and Missouri are vital links in this great national rural electrification chain.

IV. SEEING THAT EVERY LOAN IS REPAID

In creating the REA, Congress gave us a two-fold job. We are required to make loans for electric service to rural residents who are not now receiving central-station service. In addition, Congress required that all such loans should be repaid within the time agreed. Consequently, REA has two vital functions to perform: to see that such electric service is provided in the first place, and that the loans therefor are repaid. This shows the importance of providing each REA System with the best knowledge available on the successful operating practices of all systems, so as to make every system succeed.

V. REA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is so easy to take accomplishments for granted. We assume that they were always there. Yet, all of you know the long, continuous, upward struggle REA has made in order to attain its present goal. Just glance back at where we started. When REA was established in 1935, about one farm in ten had high-line electric service. Now, over one in four has high-line service. You need hardly be reminded that such an accomplishment marks genuine rural electrification progress.

VI. WHAT WE HAVE TO DO

However, REA is a vital, growing organization. We are not satisfied with present accomplishments. What do we have to do? Briefly, this. Within all reasonable limits of economic feasibility, we must attempt to reach the more than seventy percent without service. We only have to draw upon the experience of Europe before the present war to show that this is distinctly possible These European figures are instructive. They show that America can do what most nations have already done; namely, serve the vast majority of rural residents with electric service. A glance at the blackboard will make this perfectly clear.

INFORMATION ON BLACKBOARD - COLUMN "C"

"PERCENTAGE OF RURAL RESIDENTS OF OTHER NATIONS RECEIVING ELECTRICITY"

Norway - over 55%

Sweden - 65%

Denmark - over 85%

Japan - 90%

New Zealand	-	over two-thirds
France	-	over 90%
Holland	-	practically 100%

VII. RELATIONSHIP WITH AGRICULTURE

As you know, REA is a vital and integral part of the Department of Agriculture. It is legally and logically so. It is a clear case of the right hand aiding the left. As you superintendents recognize clearly, we have barely begun to tap the possibilities of widespread rural electrification in agriculture. Now with our close integration with Agriculture, we are in a position to assist you greatly in developing a well-rounded conception of rural electrification and sound agriculture. This begins with the addition of new and better ways of raising existing crops and ends logically with the introduction of new agricultural products and processes which will increase existing farm income. This not only stabilizes agriculture and the farm home, but it also promotes a sound program of rural electrification as well.

VIII. PROMOTING SOUND NATIONAL DEFENSE

In order to keep abreast of the rapidly moving developments in America, I am pleased to state that REA has been officially designated as a National Defense agency. This means that your system and all REA systems will play a vital role in national defense. Sometimes, it is supplying power to the Army camps or the airways of America. Again, it may be power for small vital industries essential to our national defense program. Or in the case of some REA projects, it means supplying power for immediate armament needs.

In this connection, permit me to read from a recent memorandum to the staff, the fine remarks of our Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard. Secretary Wickard pays tribute to what you and the other REA systems are doing, in these words:

"Hundreds of REA cooperatives already operating, with more organizing every month, are taking electric energy into the open country. Thus, the first essential for the operation of decentralized industry--a power supply--is being provided."

In other words, both agriculture and REA are being girded to a sound agricultural economy as well as to a sound system of national defense. In this connection, I can do no better than quote the words of Chester C. Davis,

Agricultural Commissioner of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense:

"Here is a war whose conclusion might be the imposition everywhere of moral, spiritual, and economic concepts which would destroy freedom as we know it.

"The sooner America demonstrates her strength by speedy and complete economic mobilization, the less likely the prospect becomes that we shall be compelled to test it in war."

I especially commend Commissioner Davis' words on decentralization of industry, a vital part of the REA program:

".....We are striving for the maximum possible decentralization of new defense industries not only because it is sound practice for the country as a whole but because of its importance to agriculture. Decentralized industry brought close to rural areas means jobs for low-income farmers and a diversified new market for farm products....."

IX. SABOTAGE

We have all heard much talk about the Fifth Column. Fortunately,

with the fine cooperation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or F. B. I., as it is called, you can now do something about it. Through the good offices of Director J. Edgar Hoover of the F. B. I., I am pleased to announce that a session is to be devoted to Sabotage on Tuesday, February 11, at 10:30 a.m. I am sure every one of you will be interested in the fine message their Special Agent will bring to you, telling you how you can cooperate effectively in the present National Defense Program.

X. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION FOR THE MILLIONS

As all of you know by now, with the aid of our staff, we have prepared a little volume called "Rural America Lights Up." Within the 142 brief pages of this tiny volume, the whole story of rural electrification and the REA is set forth simply, clearly, and vigorously.

Here is a book that contains invaluable information that every superintendent should know. Here is a reference work that no board member should fail to thoroughly understand. Here is a delightful little volume that no member of your project should fail to read.

An informed membership is a dependable one. Knowledge and facts are the surest and safest means of building and continuing the present successes of every REA system.

This small volume tells the story of your role and the role of all other REA systems in cooperation with the REA in introducing widespread rural electrification for the millions, and not for the favored few. I express the hope that this friendly little volume will be read by every member of your System.

XI. A NOBLE KIND OF PUBLIC SERVICE

One of the inspiring things about being associated with the REA program is the splendid types of public servants that you encounter constantly. This is especially true of the endless labors and the fine public spirit you superintendents and managers are bringing to all of your daily tasks. Dollars are just so big, but the enlightened attitude of public service is perhaps the finest thing in the world. I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the fine, unselfish, public-minded attitude you superintendents and managers are exercising constantly in the operation of your systems.

Truly, this is perhaps the noblest thing any American citizen could do in the vital task of rebuilding rural America into a sound and lasting agricultural economy.

XII. HOW YOU CAN HELP US

We have learned a great deal from our previous conferences. You superintendents and managers have made it possible. Your suggestions and constructive criticisms make us aware of existing problems as well as those that lie ahead. In order to continue to receive your aid in all such matters, I would like to make one simple request.

After this conference is over and you are back at your daily tasks, will you give me the benefit of your reactions to this conference. How was it run? What things were omitted? What things should be included? Include any suggestions or ideas that you believe will be of value in the REA program. I would appreciate receiv ng such a letter from each one of you superintendents and managers present.

3-11-41
3-28-41